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SUBJECT: OFFICIAL BENEFITS FOR DRC TRANSITIONAL PRESIDENT AND
VICE-PRESIDENTS

REF: 06 Kinshasa 1725

¶1. (U) Six days after candidates Joseph Kabila and Jean-Pierre Bemba held their first meeting after the final round of presidential elections (reftel), Kabila, in his capacity as Transitional President, signed a decree formally articulating post-Transition rights and privileges of the president and four vice presidents of the 2003-06 Transition. The decree was dated November 13, 2006 and published in the Official Journal of November 15, which has just been released.

¶2. (U) The decree extends benefits to both Kabila and Bemba as well as to the remaining three vice presidents of the Transition, Z'Aidi Ngoma, Abdoulaye Yerodia and Azarias Ruberwa. They include: a monthly allowance equal to three-quarters of their final salaries, a residence, a vehicle, a security force provided by the national police of 15 for the president and 12 for each vice-president, two first- or business class international air tickets per year and diplomatic passports for each of them and their wives, and free medical care in-country or abroad for each of them and their families. The decree states that these benefits will continue for the duration of the post-Transition parliament.

¶3. (SBU) Comment. Details of the decree were not publicly known until the release of this edition of the Official Journal. The terms are generous. On past experience, convincing Bemba to limit his personal guard to a police detachment after the new government takes office will present challenges similar to those during the Transition, when he maintained a large personal militia. For his part, President Kabila will not doubt continue to rely on the Presidential Guard for his personal security. End comment.

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